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Response To Councilman Dunne's Mistake Filled Press Release

For Immediate Release

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(July 20, 2004- TROY)- Councilman Dunne reached a new level Tuesday by issuing a press release that was filled with numerous errors.

Dunne's first remark was that he was frustrated by the inaction of the Tutunjian administration in pursuing the money the City of Rensselaer owes Troy in back water bills. While Dunne claims inaction, in fact discussions have been ongoing throughout the year with Rensselaer in an effort to fix the situation. Tutunjian asked the Corporation Counsel's office to get the money without having to file a lawsuit, which would cost both time and money. The back water bills due, which Tutunjian announced he would retrieve after years of actual inaction during his State of the City address, should be settled soon.

"Councilman Dunne had the time to travel to Albany today to learn of this situation during a financial Supervisory Board meeting, and then had the time to call the press and act like he knew what he was talking about," Tutunjian said. "But he somehow could not find the time over the past 6 months to call me and ask where the situation stood."

Dunne then goes on to talk of the "almost certain double digit tax increase" the mayor will propose this year, and saying that Tutunjian will have to cut services, jobs, and raise taxes in balance the budget in 2005. Unfortunately, Dunne could not be more wrong, again.

Since the beginning of the year, costs have been cut in all areas of the City, but services have increased tenfold over previous years, as seen by the cleaner and safer streets. And unlike Dunne, and the rest of his supporters, Tutunjian is not ready to dump the problems of the City on the backs of the taxpayers.

"We have worked very hard this year to keep costs down, and we have been successful thus far," Tutunjian said. "We have asked for 3.5 percent to be cut out of the budget, and I have told department heads to be prepared to cut back an additional 7 percent next year in an effort to keep costs in line. No doubt tough decisions will have to be made, I just wish Mr. Dunne would join the team in trying to fix the problems, instead of creating new ones."

It should also be noted that Dunne voted against lowering Troy's water rate this year, against adding nearly \$100,000 into a contingency account, and against cutting unnecessary services from the budget.

"When Mr. Dunne wants to talk about protecting the residents of Troy, he should look at his voting record from January where he voted against cutting more than \$150,000 in fat from the budget."

Dunne then goes on to talk about how collecting the money will help offset any tax increase. The trend continues, Mr. Dunne is wrong. Any money collected from Rensselaer would not be recurring revenue, and therefore would never be plugged into the budget.

Later in the press release, Dunne questions the ethics of Corporation Counsel John Hicks, who has had nothing to do with the negotiations.

“I find it offensive that Councilman Dunne would insinuate that I would play politics over the interests of the people of Troy,” Tutunjian said. “I have never done that, nor will I. This situation has been ongoing, and is being pursued in the best interests of Troy, something I am sure Mr. Dunne knows nothing about.”

After Dunne’s attack on Hick, he attacks the rest of the Corporation Counsel’s office for not living in Troy. As we have seen in the past, Dunne is wrong. Two of the Deputy Corporation Counsel’s live in the City of Troy, David Mitchell and George Schindler. Disregarding Dunne’s sophomoric attempts at poking fun of the residences of the Corporation Counsel, Tutunjian pointed out that Dunne stated: “Harry can try and blame the previous administration for the predicament he’s in...”

“Councilman Dunne finally got something right,” Deputy Mayor Dan Crawley said. “This situation was brought to the attention of the previous administration, and the people in the Corporation Counsel’s office, who did live in Troy as Mr. Dunne so passionately pointed out. Pattison’s Corporation Counsel may have lived in Troy, but he didn’t do much else.”

Enclosed you will find numerous memos from Comptroller Deborah Witkowski to former Mayor Mark Pattison alerting him of the situation.

“I have been working diligently since early 2003 on this situation,” Witkowski said. “I have sent numerous memos to the former Corporation Counsel and former Mayor asking for support collecting the back money. This is not a new situation, but it is one close to being resolved.”